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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MODERATE BABIL SADRIST ON U.S. ROLE IN HELPING WEAKEN EXTREMISTS

CLASSIFIED BY: Kenneth M. hillas, PRT Leader, Babil PRT, Dept of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) In an April 6 meeting with the PRT, outgoing moderate Sadrists PC member Murtada Kamel gave unsolicited suggestions on how the PRT could undermine Sadrists extremists and bolster moderates. In what appeared to be a message from the incoming Al-Ahrar PC member (Kadum Majid Tooman), who is slated to become the new Provincial Council Chairman, Kamel said that Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS) restrictions on contacts with U.S. officials had eased but not gone away. OMS, however, had become a "hollow" organization and Al-Ahrar had become the more important political vehicle for Sadrists. Kamel stressed that engaging the new PCC on PRT projects and activities will boost Majid Tooman's standing and reinforce the transition to normal political activity through Al-Ahrar. He stressed in particular that the PRT avoid engaging the new PCC on political issues in public settings, as this may put the new PCC at risk, and instead keep the focus on reconstruction.

¶2. (C) Majid Tooman reportedly deals directly with the Najaf OMS leadership and does not work through the OMS representatives in Al-Hillah. Kamel noted that Majid Tooman had opposed the OMS decision to take up arms against the ISF in the spring of 2008, and as punishment this fall was given eleventh place on the Ahrar slate of PC candidates. A popular incumbent, Majid Tooman was elected to the new PC anyway.

¶3. (C) In a surprising recommendations for a Sadrists, Kamel suggested the USG and/or the GOI make public evidence that demonstrates the ties of OMS hard-liners are in the pay of Iran. He pointed at the so-called National Front as an example of OMS members who are "agents of Iran." He argued that such a step would weaken the hard-liners politically.

¶4. (C) Kamel also said that the CF needed to use upcoming releases of detainees in a way to strengthen Sadrists (Al-Ahrar)-CF relations. "Shrinking the gap" between Sadrists and CF would not be easy, he said, but it could be done, in his view. He made clear that only detainees without outstanding arrest warrants should be released, and that the releases should be given media coverage.

¶5. (C) Kamel will begin studies for a master of law degree in Cairo soon. He has been one of the PRT's best Sadrists contacts, and was always exceptionally available to meet. He has no real political ambitions. His comments on the weakening of the role of the provincial OMS leadership and the apparent desire of Sadrists moderates to exploit their expected political role in the new provincial government are among the most candid in our interaction with him.

HILLAS